

Contemporary Film Theory  
Winter 86-87  
9-11 TuTh, 325 Annie May Swift  
Chuck Kleinhans  
316 AMS; office hours TBA

Prerequisite D20-1. The course examines major ideas and analytic approaches developed in contemporary film theory and related aesthetic and cultural theory.

The core of the course is a set of readings, screenings, and lectures which are intended to provide a common basis for understanding some key issues. Students should do the readings before class and bring them to class. Students will do significant additional reading on one of the topics listed in an assigned bibliography and this will be coordinated with an individual or group analysis of a film, tape, or tv program.

Required texts: (available at Norris Center store)

Mattelart, Michelle. Women, Media, and Crisis: Femininity and Disorder.  
Rosen, Philip. Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader.  
Steven, Peter. Jump Cut: Hollywood, Politics and Counter-cinema.  
Wolff, Janet. The Social Production of Art.

Supplemental texts: (also at Norris)

Handhart, John. Video Culture: A Critical Investigation  
Modleski, Tania. Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women  
Nichols, Bill, ed. Movies and Methods. Volume 2  
Wollen, Peter. Readings and Writings: Semiotic Counter-Strategies

Additional readings will be available in a course pack from CopyCat.

Tu Jan 6  
course administration  
introductory survey  
lecture: Godard and others--the impact of film practice on film theory; Godard as Brechtian, as postmodernist

Th Jan 8  
reading: Wolff, to p. 48  
Bordwell, "Classical Hollywood Cinema" [in Rosen]  
screening: Weekend (Godard, 66)

Tu Jan 13  
reading: Wolff, 49-94  
Steven, to p. 33  
Hess, "Notes on U.S. Radical Film, 1967-80" [in Steven]  
lecture: The Situation of Film Theory in 1968

Th Jan 15  
reading: Wolff, to end  
Eckert, "Shirley Temple and the House of Rockefeller" [in Steven]  
Rosen, to p. 16  
lecture: The Metaphor of Verbal Language  
screening: Through the Looking Glass (Juan Downey)  
Secondary Currents (Peter Rose)

Tu Jan 20  
reading: eds. of Cahiers du Cinema Morocco [in course pack]  
Rosen, 155-171  
Kleinhans, "Working Class Film Heroes" [in Steven]  
lecture: Morocco and Structural Analysis; From Subject to Audience

Th Jan 22  
reading: Mattelart, 1-24

Artel/Weingraf and Waldman, exchange on positive images of women [in Steven, 196-208]  
 Bathrick and Erens, exchange on star image [in Steven, 231-246]  
 Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" [in Rosen]  
 screening: Morocco (Sternberg, 30)

Tu Jan 27  
 reading: Mulvey, "VP&NC" [second time]  
 Mayne, "Feminist Film Theory and Criticism" [in course pack]  
 Turim, "Gentlemen Consume Blondes" [in course pack]  
 Kruger, "Devils with Red Dresses On" [in course pack]  
 Arbutnot /Seneca, "Pre-text and Text in Gentlemen Prefer  
 Blondes [in course pack]  
 Gagnon, "Bella-donna" [course pack]  
 lecture: The Woman on the Screen and in the Audience  
 screening: Material Girl (perf. Madonna)

Th Jan 29  
 reading: Mattelart, 25-56  
 Williams, "Film Body: An Implantation of Perversions" [in Rosen]  
 screening: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (Hawks, 53)

Tu Feb 3  
 reading: Holland/Sherman, "Gothic Possibilities" [in course pack]  
 Modleski, "The Female Uncanny: Gothic Novels for Women" [in course pack]  
 Lesage, "Artful Racism, Artful Rape: Griffith's Broken Blossoms"  
 lecture: Psychoanalysis, the Female Gothic Imagination, and the  
 audience  
 \*\*\*\*\* short answer exam over readings (40 min.)

Th Feb 5  
 \*\*\*\*\*first summary due  
 screening: Jane Eyre (Stevenson, 1944)

Tu Feb 10  
 readings: Augst: "The Lure of Psychoanalysis in Film Theory" [in course  
 pack]  
 Metz, "The Imaginary Signifier" (exerpts) [in Rosen]  
 lecture: From Psychoanalysis to Social Semiotics

Th Feb 12  
 readings: Wollen, "Counter-cinema: Vent d'est" [in Rosen]  
 Taylor, "Decolonizing the Image: New U.S. Black Cinema" [in Steven]  
 Becker/Citron/Lesage/Rich, "Lesbians and Film" [in Steven]  
 lecture: Counter-cinemas

Tu Feb 17  
 \*\*\*\*\*second summary due  
 screening: Charmed Particles (Andrew Noren)  
 lecture: Overlooked and Unfashionable: Unanswered Questions and Unknown Practices

Th Feb 19 \*\*\*\*\*students work on close analysis projects

Tu Feb 24 \*\*\*\*\*students work on close analysis projects

Th Feb 26 \*\*\*\*\*students work on close analysis projects

Tu Mar 3  
 \*\*\*\*\*reports on projects due  
 readings: Mattelart, 57-end  
 Desnoes, "The Photographic Image of Underdevelopment"  
 Birri, "Cinema and Underdevelopment"  
 lecture: Beyond Ethnocentric Theory: Third World Practice and Problems  
 of Cross-Cultural Analysis  
 screening: Rte: Nicaragua (Forwarding Address: Nicaragua, Birri)

Th Mar 5 screening: Iracema (Brodsky, )

Tu Mar 10

course evaluation  
final exam questions handed out  
readings: Enzensberger, "The Industrialization of the Mind" and  
"Constituents of a Theory of the Media"  
Hoberman, "TV or Not TV. What Was the Question?"  
lecture: The Situation of Film Theory in 1987

Th Mar 12

screening: Under the Cherry Moon (Prince, 86)

final exam at time listed in course schedule: 9-11, Wed. 18 Mar.

Assignments. The lectures and screenings are a key part of the course, therefore attendance is important and will be considered in grading.

a. Summaries. The purpose of this assignment is to give the student experience in understanding a theoretical argument. Two summaries of about 500 words (2 pp.) are required from the assigned bibliography. There will be a sign up list outside Chuck's office. The summaries should succinctly summarize the main ideas and argument of one of the articles or chapters. The summary should be reproduced for distribution to the entire class. Ideally, the summaries should be of a topic area you will work on for the close analysis project.

b. Close analysis project. The purpose of this assignment is to give the student the experience of relating a theoretical area to a specific film, tape, or tv program. It should draw on five or six articles or chapters from the bibliography. The student should choose a specific film, tape, or program episode to work from. When dealing with a long work it is acceptable to deal with only one part (see, for example, Bellour's "The Obvious and the Code," or Browne's "The Spectator-in-the-Text" in Rosen). In general, it is probably easier to do this using a film and watching it on the horizontal editing table than using a tape. A list of films and tapes in the department's collection is available in the office. The completed project should present the close analysis and the related discussion of the theoretical concerns. Copies should be reproduced for distribution to the entire class.

Group work is acceptable and encouraged for this assignment. Members could, for example, work together on the close analysis, or each do separate sections.

In addition to the above-mentioned assignments, there will be a short examination over the reading up to and including that date on Feb. 3. The final will cover the entire course, including all the close analyses done by students. It will consist of both a short answer section and an essay from questions given in advance. her on the close analysis, or each do separate sections.

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